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AUTHOR Caliendo, Eric; Kopacz, Renae
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ABSTRACT

An action research project was designed and implemented to improve student motivation and performance levels in middle school music performance programs. The targeted population consisted of 43 eighth-grade band and choral students in two diverse suburbs of a large Midwestern city. The problem of lack of motivation to achieve high levels of performance was documented through teacher observation and assessment of student responses to challenging assignments. Analysis of probable cause data indicated that students may attribute musical ability to talent rather than effort. In addition, students may experience a lack of motivation in performance groups because they lack a connection with the literature chosen by the director. Reviews of instructional strategies indicated a lack of opportunity for performance students to listen to and analyze professional performances as well as their own performances. A review of solution strategies suggested by the literature combined with analysis of the problem setting resulted in the selection of the following intervention strategies: students will listen to and analyze professional recordings of music to be performed; student-led sectional rehearsals will be held; and students will critique their own videotaped performances. A comparison of pretest and posttest results showed an increase in music achievement scores from 79.6% to 90.2% for band students and from 74.5% to 87.7% for choral students which led teacher/researchers to recommend providing opportunities for performance students to listen to and analyze professional recordings as well as their own performances. Student-led sectional rehearsals are also recommended. (Contains 3 figures, 4 tables of data, and 21 references. Appendixes contain a checklist for recording intervention, a sectional rubric, a student reflection form, audition forms, and a survey for music performance groups.) (Author/BT)

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IMPROVING STUDENT MOTIVATION AND PERFORMANCE IN MUSIC PROGRAMS

Eric Caliendo
Renae Kopacz

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This project was approved by

Dr. Susan L Marcus
Advisor

Dr Bonnie Burns
Advisor

Dr Beverly Hulley
Dean, School of Education

ABSTRACT

Authors: Eric Caliendo Renae M. Kopacz

A program was designed and implemented to improve student motivation and performance levels in middle school music performance programs. The targeted population consists of 43 8th grade band and choral students in two diverse suburbs of a large Midwestern city. The problem of lack of motivation to achieve high levels of performance was documented through teacher observation and assessment of student responses to challenging assignments.

Analysis of probable cause data indicated that students may attribute musical ability to talent rather than effort. In addition, students may experience a lack of motivation in performance groups because they lack a connection with the literature chosen by the director. Reviews of instructional strategies indicate a lack of opportunity for performance students to listen to and analyze professional performances as well as their own performances.

A review of solution strategies suggested by literature combined with analysis of the problem setting resulted in the selection of the following intervention strategies. Students will listen to and analyze professional recordings of music to be performed. Student-led sectional rehearsals will be held. Students will critique their own video-taped performances.

A comparison of pretest and posttest results show an increase in music achievement scores from 79.6% to 90.2% for band students and from 74.5% to 87.7% for choral students. Teacher/researchers strongly suggest providing opportunities for performance students to listen to and analyze professional recordings as well as listening to and critiquing their own performances. Student-led sectional rehearsals are also recommended by the teacher/researchers.

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Chapter 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

There is a lack of self-motivation for learning among instrumental and choral students at the elementary and middle school levels. Evidence for this problem includes teacher observation and teacher assessment of student responses to challenging assignments.

Immediate Problem Context School A

School A is a middle school consisting of grades seven and eight. The racial/ethnic background is as follows: the Mexican/American population is 50.3%, the White population is 33.5%, the Black population is 9.6%, and the Asian population is 6.6%. Fifty-four point seven percent of the students are of low-income families, and 43.4% of the students have limited English proficiency. The average class size is at 18.6. Student mobility is 28.6%, and there is a chronic truancy rate of 1.4%.

Eighty-nine point three percent of teachers at School A are White. Black teachers make up 2.4%, and 7.3% of the teachers are of Mexican/American descent. Less than 1% of the teachers are Asian or Native American. The faculty is predominantly female, at 76.7%. Males comprise 23.3% of the faculty. Teachers with a Master's degree or above account for 53.6% of the staff. The average teaching experience of teachers at School A is 15.8 years. The teacher to student ratio is 22.7:1. Teacher's average salary is $45,477. The administration at School A consists of one principal and one assistant principal. The average administrator salary is $73,715.

The school is located in a low-middle class suburb of a large Midwestern city. It has 35 classrooms on two floors with a subterranean cafeteria. The building is approximately 40 years old, and has a full size gymnasium and an auditorium which seats 330. Students have access to two fully equipped compute labs with 30 computers each. The building is also equipped with an art room, band room, chorus/music room, two science labs, and a learning center, equipped with seven computers. All classrooms contain one to three computers. The school is connected to the Internet and the students have access to this.

Because of an increase in population in the area serviced by School A and the fact that it houses the entire English as a Second language (ESL) program at the Middle School level for the district, six mobile units have been installed. Three of these units are in front of the school and three are behind. Support staff includes: one nurse, one nurse's aide, two dean's assistants, a learning center aide, one self-contained learning disabled teacher's aide, and two school psychologists (one Spanish speaking).

Besides the core academic classes of math, social sciences, language arts, physical education and science, seventh graders also receive instruction in art, the applied arts, music, speech and reading. Eighth graders can select elective classes including performing arts, computers, Spanish, art, vocational technology and home economics. Band, orchestra, and chorus are also classes open to both seventh and eighth grade students.

Extra-curricular activities include girls' and boys' basketball, boys' football, girls' volleyball, boys' and girls' track, and intramurals. In addition, students may participate in after school chorus, full orchestra, jazz band, yearbook, student council, peer tutoring, Challenge of the Books Club, and an after school homework club.

Students who make the Honor Roll can go on special field trips every quarter. There is a special trip to a local amusement park for those students who make Honor Roll, have perfect attendance, or perfect behavior for three quarters of the school year. Students also have the opportunity to take a trip to Washington D.C. during spring break.

School District B

School District B is a very large elementary school district in Illinois. School District B serves over 16,000 students in 27 schools. School District B covers over 31 square miles and serves seven communities in the northwest suburbs of a large Midwestern city. School District B maintains a teaching staff of 1,092 teachers all of whom hold bachelor's degrees, with 60% holding advanced degrees. The average length of teaching experience in the district is 17.6 years. Ninety-eight percent of the teachers are White. School District B operates on a per-pupil expenditure of $7,143.00.

The racial breakdown of the students in School District B is as follows: 74.4% are White, 17.1% are Asian/Pacific Islander, 6.5% are Black, 6.4% are Mexican/American, and .09% are Native American. The percentage of students from low income families is 4.1%. Limited-English Proficient students comprise 4.1% of the student population. The student mobility rate in the district is 10.2%, with a 96.1% attendance rate. The district also maintains a bilingual program which serves students from 26 different language groupings.

The breakdown in expenditures for the district are as follows: Education is 65.1%, Fire Prevention and Safety is 12.5%, Operations and Maintenance is 7.1%, Bond Interest is 7.0%, Transportation is 6.5%, and Social Security/Municipal Retirement accounts for 1.9% of the budget which comes to a district wide total of $125,978,957.00. School District B's IGAP scores exceed the state averages in every category.

A number of programs are available to the students in School District B. Besides the core academic courses, there are also many other opportunities. There is a large anti-drug program (D.A.R.E.), which reaches 1,700 6th graders across the district. There is a district-wide environmental protection program called C.A.R.E. at the elementary levels. There are also different levels of gifted and special education programs, with two schools in the district housing their "magnet" students. In junior high, School District B is heading towards a middle-school concept with the students on teams throughout the day.

The elective choices in junior high are full year band or orchestra, full year French or Spanish, or six different trimester exploratory classes, such as life skills, tech Ed, chorus, art, general music, and communications. The students may choose two elective classes each year.

The instrumental music program in School District B has over 1200 participants enrolled from fifth through eighth grade. The fifth and sixth grade lessons are on a pull-out basis for half an hour lessons per week. The students attend an after-school practice with other grade school "feeder" schools at the nearest junior high. Once in junior high, band and orchestra become a curricular subject; the groups meet in school every day. There are no more after-school rehearsals, and the students receive a grade which counts towards their grade-point average. There are currently 14 instrumental music staff personnel in School District B. Lesson groups in the grade schools are with like instruments capped at 10 students per lesson group. Only flute, clarinet, trumpet and trombone are offered as beginning band instruments. Violin, viola, and cello are offered at the beginning level for strings. Students have the opportunity to try the other instruments out after having successfully completed two years on their beginning instrument.

The Surrounding Community School A

School A is part of one of the largest school districts in Illinois. School District A serves all or parts of 11 suburbs. The 90 square mile boundary overlaps three counties and includes all or part of seven townships. The total enrollment is 33,974 students; 20,373 are elementary school students, 4,819 are middle school students (grades seven and eight), and 8,782 are high school students.

The student population in the district includes a variety of racial backgrounds. Sixty-six different languages were noted in a recent bilingual census. The racial percentage breakdown is as follows: 61% are White, 25% are Mexican/American, 8% are Black, and 6% are Asian.

The neighborhood surrounding School A is a low to middle income community. Housing ranges from single-family dwellings to duplex and quadroplex to apartment houses. Homes range in price from approximately $75,000 to $200,000. Rental units range in price form $450 - $1,000 per month. There are a few houses that have been condemned and are boarded up.

There is a family owned grocery next to the school on one side and house on all other sides. Most of the neighborhood is residential, with some small businesses including some fast food franchises.

School District B

The seven communities served by School District B are all considered family oriented suburbs. Community B-1 is the largest and fastest growing community in the area, and is entirely serviced for their elementary school needs by School District B. Community B-1 has grown from 130 residents in 1956 to over 73,000 today. With more than 33 million square feet of commercial, office and industrial development, this suburb is one of the most sought after business addresses in Illinois.

Communities in the area have been carefully planned to include green space and recreational facilities. Playgrounds, bike trails and jogging paths are designed for growing families as well as singles. Housing styles vary in the communities from apartments to condominiums to large single-family homes. The median price of housing in all of the communities served by School District B is $168,700, with the highest community being $191,000 and the lowest at 138,000.

The business employment opportunities in this area are many. Some of the area's major employers are Sears Roebuck & Co., a major shopping center, Motorola, and AT&T. These businesses have helped to spawn a 90% increase in the population from 1970 to 1990. The community services are also plentiful, with Community B-1 having a town square featuring a clock tower, retail stores, restaurants, open air theatre, and a new community library. The Community B-1 district library is the second largest library in the

state in terms of circulation, and boasts the largest business collection in the large Midwestern city area. The local park districts have many programs for all ages. Community B-1 has 72 parks on 1,000 acres, three community centers, and a new indoor aquatic center.

Regional and National Context of the Problem

Motivation has always been a major part of music education. According to Nicholls (as cited in Legette, 1998), "Some students strive and work for the sake of their own personal fulfillment, while others work because they are required to and do not believe that their actions are related to success and failure." While being a part of the performance group is a good place to start, the problem comes into play when students are satisfied with simply playing or singing the correct notes. Students need to have the impetus not only to master the skill of note reading; they need to be motivated to master the more intricate musical aspects such as phrasing, dynamics, and tempos.

Band and choral directors continually strive to find ways in which to motivate students to become more than merely proficient musicians. The quest for motivational techniques lies mainly in understanding the research of Attribution Theory. According to Frieze and Weiner (1993):

> Attribution theory indicates that students' perceptions of the reasons for success and failure determine future behaviors. Outcomes can be attributed to four causes: ability, effort, task difficulty, or luck. Ability and effort are considered to be internal attributes, while luck and task difficulty are considered to be external to the student. Ability and task difficulty are perceived as stable and unchangeable (at least in post-adolescents), while effort and luck are considered to be unstable and subject to change. For example, if a student attributes success to effort, he/she is likely to continue to persist when faced with a new challenge. Conversely, if success is attributed to luck, the student is not likely to make greater efforts in the future, nor is this successful outcome likely to

influence the student's perceptions of his/her ability (par.20)

It is still uncertain why students join music performance groups. Many elementary and junior-high school age children get involved in music groups because in their own words, "My mom and dad made me". Others get involved because their friends are involved. These are not necessarily bad reasons. After all, many performance groups of students at this age level are judged by the layman more on size as opposed to ability level. These students may well develop a sense of self-motivation which leads them to be more successful than one would think. However, as educators, band and choral directors must take care with these larger performance groups. According to Hylton (1981):

> Although participation in group success can be a very positive experience for students, music classes which place tremendous emphasis on group achievement, rather than individual growth, do little to encourage individual effort or foster individual self-concept gains. Students in classes with a heavy emphasis on group achievement often are not evaluated on individual musical growth but rather on attendance and participation in group activities. Such evaluation may affect positively a student's social self-concept, but may have little effect on their self-concept of music ability. (par.49)

This may lead students to believe their individual effort does not make a major difference to the group performance, and thus, could squelch self-motivation to become high level performers.

Today's educators must constantly seek out new ways of keeping students motivated in order to master new skills. Many times we see students who are content just to belong to the organization, and don't have the motivation towards high musical achievement. According to Klinedinst (cited in Reynolds, 1998), "music self-concept is related to student participation in music activities. Furthermore, there is limited evidence to suggest that music self-concept may be related to music achievement". We need to find ways to help students realize that high musical achievement can add to the rewards of just

being a member of a performance group. This study will look into ways of helping students develop the self-motivation to become high level performers.

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

The teacher-researchers designed two pre-tests to assess the targeted middle school performance students. The first test administered was a music performance test. Each student was heard individually on his/her respective instrument/voice. Each student was given a numerical score according to performance (see Appendix A). Band students were tested in the following categories: notes, rhythms, tone, time and sight-reading. Choral students were tested in the categories of range, intonation, tone quality and solo capabilities.

An analysis of the test scores can be seen in Figure 1. The targeted band students averaged a score of 79.6%, while the targeted choral students averaged 74.6% on musical performance. The teacher/researchers find these scores as indicative of beginning of the year ability level for performance students at the middle school level.

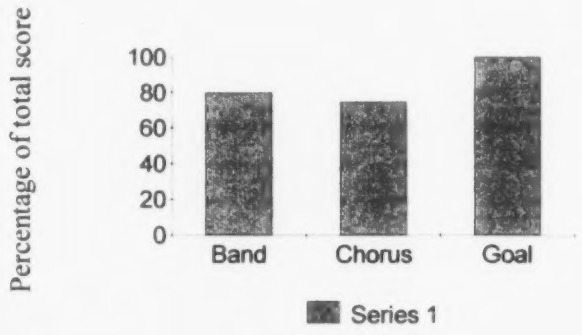

Figure 1. Average Musical Performance Scores of Band and Chorus Students

The targeted middle school performance students were also administered a musical attitude survey. The purpose of this survey was to assess how the students rate themselves in four different music performance categories. These categories are talent versus effort, practice habits, influences and music difficulty. There were twenty questions on the music attitude survey. Students were asked to rate their attitude for each question as strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree. See Appendix B for the full attitude survey.

Tables one and two present representative questions from the four categories on the attitude survey. Table 1 illustrates a break-down of answers from band and chorus groups separately.

Table1. Musical Attitude Representative Questions Displayed with Separate Scores for Band and Chorus.

	Strongly Disagree	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
1. I practice my music every day.	Band - 1 Chorus - 0	Band - 12 Chorus - 11	Band - 7 Chorus - 10	Band - 1 Chorus - 1
2. I like to perform easy music in band/chorus.	Band - 3 Chorus - 1	Band - 13 Chorus - 7	Band - 3 Chorus - 12	Band - 2 Chorus -2
3. Right now I am performing to my fullest	Band - 0 Chorus - 0	Band - 4 Chorus - 2	Band - 12 Chorus - 14	Band - 5 Chorus - 6
4. If none of my friends was in band/chorus, I would still be in band/chorus.	Band - 1 Chorus - 0	Band - 0 Chorus - 0	Band - 7 Chorus - 12	Band - 13 Chorus - 10

Note. Band students = 21 Choral students = 22

Table 2 indicates total number of total students who strongly disagree, disagree, agree and strongly agree with the representative questions from the attitude survey.

Table 2. Musical Attitude Representative Questions with Combined Band/Chorus Scores.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I practice my music every day.	1	23	17	2
2. I like to perform easy music in band/chorus.	4	20	15	4
3. Right now I am performing to my fullest	0	6	26	11
4. If none of my friends were in band/chorus, I would still be in band/chorus.	1	0	19	23

Note. Total number of band and chorus students = 43

Test scores indicate that attitudinally, students rank themselves at a high level. For instance, as question number three indicates, 20 out of 22 choral students and 17 out of 21 band students feel they are performing to their fullest potential. This information does not coincide with the performance test scores. Referring back to Figure 1; Students' aptitude scores show the targeted performance students are performing at 74%-79% of expected capabilities. The teacher/researchers' previous experience with performance groups at this level leads them to believe the students can perform to their fullest potential, but may not

actually be doing so at this time. Students' attitudes about their abilities seem to be much higher than their actual ability level.

Though the teacher/researchers are pleased that the students seem to be highly motivated at this time, there is the possibility that as work becomes more difficult, student attitude and motivation may deteriorate. The teacher/researchers are also concerned with the possibility that the targeted performance students may have replied to questions on the attitude survey in a way that would please the teacher and not necessarily reflect actual attitudes.

In conclusion, the students who were administered the musical performance and music attitude pre-tests ranked an average of 74%-76% on performance yet felt they were performing to their fullest potential at this time.

Probable Causes

There are many probable causes that can contribute to a lack in self-motivation and high achievement among middle school aged choral and instrumental music students. If expectations are low, students may not be motivated to achieve at a high level. Many times, the teacher researchers have introduced challenging pieces of music to their performance groups amidst groans of despair. However, as rehearsals go on, students begin to enjoy the challenge and hard work as the piece begins to take shape. They see a direct correlation between their effort and how well the group is performing. In the Gemeinhardt Report 4, parents place high performance standards as one of the top five characteristics of a strong high school band program (Brown, 1994).

Research in the field also points to students attributing musical ability to talent rather than effort as a probable cause for a lower motivation and achievement level. According to Asmus (1985):

> Teachers have been shown to attribute student success and failure to effort (Asmus, 1986; Prawat, Byers, & Anderson, 1983). Fortunately, students

> also attribute a large portion of reasons for success and failure in music to internal-unstable causes. Internal-unstable causes, such as effort, encourage student persistence until a task has been successfully achieved. Unfortunately, students attribute a slightly greater proportion of reasons for success and failure in music to internal-stable causes such as ability. Internal-stable attributions do not promote achievement persistence at the same level as internal-unstable attributions because they rely on the innate capabilities of the student (pg. 268).

Experience of the teacher-researchers has been that many middle school performance students feel that no matter how hard they practice, they will never be as good as another student they deem as having more talent than they do. It seems as though even the most dedicated musicians in these performance groups can be subject to feelings of inadequacy if they assume talent has more to do with success than their own practice and effort.

Report IV in the Gemeinhardt Series lists conflicts with sports and participation in other school activities as the number two and three top reasons for contributing to weak band programs (Brown, 1994). Students today have opportunities to participate in many activities both in and outside of school. Although many student musicians express a desire to excel and have an understanding of the importance of effort and practice, they fail to realize their goals because they lack the focus to do so. When students lives become inundated with a multiplicity of commitments, something has to give, so to speak. The teacher-researchers have found that many parents want their children to have a wide variety of experiences. This may cause students to experience "over-load", thus making it difficult to perform any activity to its fullest potential. Students soon learn to see practice as work and get frustrated at not having down-time to simply play or rest. Time is a precious commodity to be divided between activities, work, school, and family. The role of parental encouragement, or lack there of, can play heavily in a student's decision whether or not to remain in a school musical performance group. Band directors surveyed

in the Gemeinhardt Report II, cited their number one reason for dropouts as lack of encouragement from parents (Brown, 1985).

Many students experience a lack of motivation in performance groups because they lack a connection with the literature chosen by the director.

> Some time ago I began asking adults what caused them to drop out of music as children. I suspected that most students played only because parents had forced lessons on them and they quit at the first opportunity. However, the majority of adults gave other reasons and cited such problems as failing to improve skills and being bored by the study materials (Young, 1994).

The teacher-researchers have found through observation that students will often perform a more difficult piece of music that they take a personal interest in at a higher level than an easier piece that they consider "boring" or have no interest in.

In summary, there are many different probable causes that all contribute to a lack in self-motivation and high achievement. These include low teacher expectations, failure for the students to equate effort to ability, conflicts with other activities, and a lack of connection to the literature. While research can point to one area or another, there is no one end all cure. All of the probable causes need to be analyzed, and interventions need to be developed to combat these causes. While this may seem like a daunting task, every step taken in the right direction will help to motivate students.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

A review of the literature on motivation revealed several solutions to the problem of motivating students in a school music performance group to excel. The understanding of the theory of attribution, student directed rehearsals, allowing students to be involved in the repertoire selection, listening to professional recordings of music to be performed, and listening and critiquing students' own performances as well as videotaping rehearsals and commenting on what was good and what still needs work are key components to motivating students in a school music performance group to excel.

First, it is necessary to study what drives a student to be motivated to achieve. One aspect of this field that has been heavily researched is the theory of Attribution. The crux of the theory of Attribution is the relationship between student effort and natural ability. According to Edward P. Asmus, who has conducted several studies in the field of Attribution Theory and its effects on student motivation,

> A few research studies have specifically investigated student motivation in the music learning process. Reimer (1975) employed Attribution Theory to study affective consequences of teacher-provided casual feedback. College students, who believed they were in a piano practicum, received instructions that described causes of piano playing success as due to either ability, effort, task simplicity, or chance. All subjects received feedback that they were successful on their piano performance. Subjects who received internal attribution instructions, ability or effort, had positive affect toward piano performance and the instructor. Furthermore, Lillemeyer (1983), in a study, of fourth grade Norwegian students, found that students with high self-concept tended to have higher perceptions of their cognitive competence,

> greater interest in school music, more positive self-esteem, higher achievement motivation, and lower levels of failure avoidance than those with low self-concept Students with a high level of interest in school music tended to have higher perceptions of their musical competence, greater success motivation, more positive perceptions of their abilities as students, greater failure avoidance, and lower perceptions of their physical competence than those with low levels of music interest" (Asmus, 1986, p.264).

In other words, students in school music performance groups who feel that their effort makes a difference in how well they perform may be more motivated to try to do their best while performing than students who believe that a good performance is only due to chance or luck.

The teacher-researchers have found in their own music performance groups that there are students who lack the motivation to excel perhaps because they do not see a correlation between their own effort and a good performance. "The lack of internal locus of control translates to a missed connection between effort and out-come: underachievers haven't learned about hard work" (Rimm, 1997, p.18). This lack of internal locus of control can be attributed to a number of factors. Teachers may not have stressed this concept with students while rehearsing them, students may not have had this modeled for them by their parents or have simply never made the connection between their own effort and a good performance. In any case, teachers who reinforce student effort will have students who are motivated to achieve. "...[M]otivation is increasingly becoming recognized as a contributing factor in teacher effectiveness. Ball (1997, pp.1-2) states that, when a failure occurs in any educational system, motivation is often blamed. Various studies (Khan, 1969; Schroeder & Sledge, 1966) suggests that motivation is related positively to achievement but that motivation factors have not been adequately measured" (Caimi, 1981, p.183). The question arises, "how does a teacher motivate students to excel in a school music performance program?"

A look at some of the literature on the subject tells us that teachers must teach concepts the students value as having importance. Rebecca Johnson says, "In Raymond Wlodkowski's book, *Enhancing Adult Motivation to Learn,* he writes: "Human beings strive for understanding and mastery, and tend to be motivated when they are effectively learning something of value... If there is a problem with experiencing success or even expecting success, their motivation for learning will usually be detrimentally affected" (Johnson, 1996, p.16). If this is so, it can be surmised that students are motivated by success and that success motivates students to learn more and better. The bottom line seems to be that in order to be successful, a student must be either self-motivated or motivated by the teacher to excel. In the Gemienhardt Report IV, Joseph D. Brown found that one of the top 15 strengths of a high school band program is that band members are motivated to excel (Brown, 1991). Another study also bears out the importance of student motivation. Teachers are not the only ones who realize student motivation is a key factor in helping student musicians excel. "Directors and [music instrument] dealers agree that a good band program requires successful coordination of many musical and non-musical elements" (Brown, 1985, p.32). One of the top elements contributing to a successful band program according to the Gemeinhardt Report #1 study is having motivated, dedicated and hard-working band members. It is necessary for teachers of music performance groups to finds means to cultivate these motivated, dedicated, hard-working students.

Research shows that music programs are looked on as being enjoyable to the students who participate. "In earlier studies by Broquist (1961), Siemans (1969), Nolin (1973), and Vander Ark, Nolin and Newman (1980) it has been noted that musical activities requiring the students to play instruments received more favorable ratings from students than activities not associated with the playing of classroom instruments" (Pogonowski, 1985, p.254). The teacher-researchers believe this plays into the students' feeling of ownership in the program which can have a positive effect on a student's

motivation. While this is a great starting point, teachers of music performance groups need to use aggressive means to ensure students' attitudes toward performing groups remain high.

One of the key ingredients to achieving these goals is through creating an environment that fosters high student self-image. "Parents and students strongly believe there are many major benefits to being in a band program. Seven major benefits were routinely expressed in the focus groups by parents and students. The number one ranking benefit to being in band is that it builds self-confidence, self-esteem and a sense of accomplishment" (Brown, 1985. p.12). Teachers need to build programs that foster these ideals held in such high regard by parents, directors, and students themselves. One of the ways to nurture self-esteem is to create a classroom atmosphere where students feel comfortable challenging themselves to be high level performers. Research has shown that by motivating students to achieve, their self-image can be improved. "The creation of a positive self-image may be encouraged by the fulfillment to achieve" (Hylton, 1981, p.301). In addition to the research surrounding the instrumental music field, there is also research in the area of vocal performance groups which corroborates with this cycle of self-image and high achievement.

> In the fields of mathematics and the visual arts, some investigators have found that training and skill in the subject matter are related to positive attitude toward the subject. (Hollingsworth, 1983; Schofield, 1982). Applying the evidence from mathematics and art to the field of music, music educators might assume that good singing skills will result in a more positive attitude toward singing and in continued enjoyment of and participation in choral activities after the elementary years (Mizner, 1993. p. 234).

The cyclical effect of high self-image creating high achievement levels which in turn creates high self-image is an important consideration for teachers of music performance groups.

Self-image and high achievement are best achieved when the performance groups as a whole are united. "One of the most important objectives is to unite the ensemble to pursue a common musical concept in an atmosphere of mutual respect" (Begian, 1997, p.32). It is the role of the teacher to develop plans and activities which create this atmosphere of mutual respect in the classroom. One activity that can be used to create this atmosphere as well as help improve the over-all achievement level of the group is the use of student directed sectionals.

> An occasional invitation to an ensemble member to come to the podium to hear how the group sounds can be a great morale booster before concerts. It is always a revelation to students who have never heard the ensemble from up front. I usually bring up section leaders and put them in charge of relaying information to the rest of the section regarding what they have just heard. Then I talk to those students after class about the improvements to be made for the next rehearsal. If you have the facilities, playing back rehearsal recordings is also informative. The incorporation of these ideas into rehearsals entails increased responsibility on the part of the ensemble members to listen, evaluate, and correct. Music educators should always challenge themselves and their students to think about listening to music and the process of making music in more creative and interesting ways (Whitlock, 1996. p.32).

The more activities teachers can create to develop student ownership of the performance group, the greater the chances of higher student achievement. The teacher must purposefully promote these activities if they want to help their students develop this sense of ownership.

Another related activity that helps to develop student involvement is having the students help select the repertoire. "Allowing students to choose some of the music to study is one form of motivation that many teachers overlook" (Young, 1994, p.80). If the students have a greater connection with the music, their desire to achieve will rise as

well. Performing music which the students enjoy can be a welcome teaching aid for the instructor. "It is important to select pieces that motivate the students, because when practicing at home they will deal with the music, not the teacher" (Magrath, 1994. p.45). Teachers need to program music that not only challenges their students, but also contains elements which appeal to the students' interests.

As teachers develop activities that foster high self-image and greater student achievement, they must also help the students build a strong knowledge base of musical technique and terminology. It is not enough for students to simply have a high self-image about their level of achievement. Successful music programs reach high levels of achievement not only through positive self-image, but also by having a firm grasp of music fundamentals. "These programs have succeeded because of a solid educational foundation that produces the superior ensembles administrators accept as an important component of an academic program" (Rohner, 1993, p.10).

The most important fundamental of music is being able to listen intelligently, not only to other performance recordings, but to the students' performance as well. "Listening is the most important aspect directors can teach musicians at any performance level" (Pettit, 1994, p.10). Having students listen to recordings of professional musicians can be an invaluable tool in achieving high levels of musicianship. "Developing students' musical independence, our primary mission, is a gradual process and begins with such relatively simple student initiatives as looking up the meaning of musical terms or finding and listening to relevant recordings without being instructed to do so" (Moss, 1996, p.18). While listening to professional recordings is a vital component of a successful program, listening to and evaluating one's own performances is even more important.

> We are often able to hear things in the music on tape that we do not notice in rehearsal. Many choral directors regularly record their rehearsals for their own use in the preparation of future rehearsals. Try audio taping or videotaping all or part of a rehearsal and then having the entire choir evaluate it. Guide

choir member to comment on what is good about specific aspects of the piece (accuracy, musicality, facial expression, posture, tone diction, phrasing, dynamics, etc.) as well as what aspects could be improved (Meredith, 1995, p.22,61).

After reviewing the literature on the problem of motivating students in school music performance groups to excel, the teacher/researchers find that a recurring theme in this research is the development of student ownership of the performance groups. Although the research points to several different methods of attaining a high level of motivation in students, they all trace back to the idea of creating student ownership. While student ownership seems to be the key to higher levels of motivation and success, specific steps need to be taken to create this ownership. These steps include understanding the theory of Attribution, student directed rehearsals, allowing students to choose part of the repertoire, listening to and critiquing professional recordings as well as video-taping rehearsals. The implementation of these steps may help students to become more motivated to excel.

Project Objectives and Processes

After reviewing the literature on the problem of students' lack of motivation to excel in junior high music programs, the teacher/researchers created the following project objectives:

As a result of the three-fold intervention plan, during the period of September 1998 to January 1999, the seventh and eighth grade students from the targeted classes will achieve high levels of musicianship and have a greater sense of ownership toward the performance group as measured by teacher-constructed rubrics filled out by students after each intervention has been completed.

In order to accomplish the project objectives, the following processes are necessary:

1. Activities that foster cooperative student involvement will be implemented.
2. Learning activities will be developed to promote student assessment
3. Listening activities will be developed to promote a greater understanding of professional music literature.

Project Action Plan

The teacher/researchers will implement three different intervention strategies. These strategies will be utilized once a week on a rotating schedule. The interventions are only being used once a week due to scheduling factors. Each intervention will be used four times during the course of the study. Data will be collected after each intervention is performed. Four pieces of music will be used for each group in this study. Each song will be used in the cycle of interventions one time.

Weeks 1,4,7, & 10: "Professional Recording"

The song to be learned will be played by the performance groups and rehearsed. The teacher/researchers will provide a professional recording of the song. The recording will be played for the entire group after the song has been rehearsed. After the recording is completed, students will be asked to provide insights into what they have heard. This will be done via a group discussion, with checklists being recorded per Appendix A. This intervention is working towards completion of objective number one, to achieve high levels of musicianship.

Weeks 2,5,8, & 11: "Sectional Work"

Students will rehearse the song in individual section groups. The groups will be student led by their respective section leaders. Section leaders will have guidance from the directors as to which sections in the music to rehearse. Sectionals will last approximately one half-hour. Students will be asked to complete an anonymous rubric at the end of each sectional. See Appendix B for a copy of the rubric. This intervention is working toward

objective number two, which is that students will have a greater sense of ownership toward the performance group.

Weeks 3,6,9, & 12: "Lights, Camera, Action"

At the beginning of the rehearsal, the groups will be videotaped performing the song being worked on in the cycle. After the performance, the groups will watch the recording. At this point, the students will individually complete a reflection sheet. See Appendix C for a copy of the reflection sheet. We will also have a 2-5 minute discussion about what the students have seen and heard. After students have handed in their reflection sheet, the groups will perform the song again while thinking about what was discussed. This intervention is working toward objectives number one and two.

Methods of Assessment

In order to assess the effects of the interventions, teacher-constructed rubrics will be filled out after each intervention. In addition, the teacher/researchers will conduct a pre-test to assess music attitude of the students in the targeted classes. See Appendix D for copies of the music attitude test. The teacher/researchers will also conduct a music attitude assessment post-test using the same form. There will also be a musical performance oriented pre and post test administered. See Appendices E & F for copies of the musical performance tests.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The objectives of this project were to foster motivation and effort to achieve high levels of musicianship and to give students a greater sense of ownership toward the performance groups. The targeted classrooms were an eighth grade chorus and an eighth grade jazz band.

The teacher/researchers implemented a three-pronged intervention plan to achieve the aforementioned objectives. The first intervention was a listening exercise. The teacher/researchers played a professional recording of a song being performed by the band or chorus. After listening to the recording, students were asked to comment on what they heard and compare it to how they were performing. The teacher/researchers kept a checklist and wrote down pertinent comments from students (Appendix A). Following the discussion, students performed the piece keeping in mind what they had heard on the professional recording and what was discussed by the group.

The second intervention was student-led sectional work. Students broke off into sections to work on their respective parts of the songs. A section leader headed each group. Teacher/researchers informed section leaders what they were to practice and the section leaders brought this information to the group so that all students were aware of what they were working on. These sectionals lasted approximately one half hour. Students were then asked to fill out an anonymous rubric (Appendix B). This rubric allowed the students to rate the overall effectiveness of the sectional rehearsal.

The final intervention involved video taping the performance groups performing a song being worked on in the cycle. After videotaping, the students watched the recording.

Each student then completed an individual reflection sheet (Appendix C). The students were to reflect on positive aspects of their performance, things that still needed work, and what they could do as an individual to help the group sound better. A two to five minute discussion ensued revolving around what the students saw and heard. After the students handed in their reflection sheets, they performed the song again while thinking about what had been discussed.

Each of these interventions was conducted on a rotating basis. Therefore, students were able to listen to a professional recording of a piece they were playing, then they conducted their own sectional rehearsals. Finally, they were video taped performing the same song. This rotation was used four times using four different pieces of music.

In order for the teacher/researchers to assess the effectiveness of each intervention, pre-tests and post-tests were given in the areas of attitude and musical performance (Appendices D,E, and F). These tests gave the teacher/researchers insight into how well students were performing their music as well as their attitudes about music in general and performance and practice techniques in particular prior to, and after, the interventions. A discussion of the results is below.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

Due to the nature of the interventions, each will be dealt with separately. The professional recording was the first intervention introduced to the eighth grade performance groups. After the students listened to the recordings, the teacher/researchers opened the class to discussion. Both teacher/researchers seemed to have had similar experiences with their students. The comments started out very stifled and banal. Generalizations were made, such as "they have good breath support", and "their arrangement is different from ours". These comments seemed to indicate that the students were indeed starting to develop good listening skills. However, it wasn't until the third and fourth cycle of this intervention that the students could really dialogue effectively about what they heard. The comments were more musically grounded and the

conversations became more animated. Questions from School B included, "Is that an acoustic bass being played in this recording?" High level listening skills seem to be at work here, as differentiating between acoustic and electric instruments on a recording can be difficult. Also shown here is an increased understanding of instrumentation and differences in musical arrangements.

At School A, one student asked how the group would be able to sing like a 1960's Motown group. Another student then asked if the chorus needed to sound like a 1960's rock group. This level of dialogue showed a considerable understanding of musical styles, young performers' limitations and the desire to perform in a pleasing and professional manner.

While hard data is difficult to obtain due to the qualitative nature of this intervention, the teacher/researchers noted a definite improvement in the students' performances of the songs after the students heard the professional recordings. Student comments were mostly geared toward the interpretive category. Students seemed highly motivated to emulate the performances they heard on tape.

The second intervention in this study was the student-led sectional practice sessions. This intervention also seemed to be effective. The teacher/researches relayed to section leaders the parts in the music to be worked on and the section leaders then led the rehearsal. The rubrics (Appendix B) filled out by the students after each sectional intervention were tallied by the teacher/researchers. In Figure 2, answers that were answered agree or strongly agree by the students were put in the positive category. The negative category contains answers by the students that were disagree or strongly disagree.

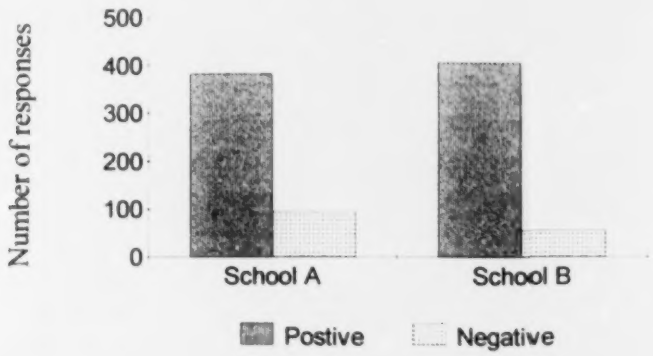

Figure 2. Students' self-evaluation of effectiveness of sectional intervention

School A - 22 students

School B - 21 students

At School A there were 381 responses of agree or strongly agree to the 5 statements in the rubric. There were 94 responses of disagree or strongly disagree to these statements. At School B, the positive response was even more striking. There were 405 responses of agree or strongly agree as opposed to 55 responses of disagree or strongly disagree to the statements in the rubric. The scale was determined by the number of students times four interventions times five questions.

The ratio of positive to negative responses at School A was 4:1, while School B had a ratio of 8:1 in favor of the intervention. Since the rubrics were filled out anonymously, it is hard to tell whether or not the negative responses were from the same people each time, or from different people. However, when the overall data is examined, the data seems to strongly suggest that the student-led sectional intervention was a positive experience for most students at both sites.

There are many possible reasons as to why the sectional intervention seemed to be so successful. The students appeared to work together better than in years past. In the

sectional rehearsals, students would "get on" other students about learning their parts. This intervention also helped the students' listening skills, as they were encouraged to listen to each other and comment on the section sound. This intervention helped the students to develop a better section sound, which in turn led to better performances with the entire group.

The third intervention to be implemented was the video taping of the students' performance of the music being worked on in the cycle. After viewing their performance on the video tape, students were to reflect on what they heard and saw (Appendix C). The comments given in these reflections gave the teacher/researchers insight into whether students could analyze their own performances objectively. It also allowed the teacher/researchers to see if the students were making connections from the discussion of professional performances as well as what they themselves were practicing during sectionals.

As with the professional recording intervention, comments on the first cycle tended to be short and stifled. A student at School A made the comment, "we had good posture" on the first implementation of this intervention. By the final implementation, the comments seemed to show more insightfulness and a working musical vocabulary to explain "positive" or "needs work" comments. Case in point, one student commented that "we need more intensity when singing the softer sections". This comment seemed to show an understanding of the concept of breath support having an important role in sustaining the singing voice through a soft passage in the music. These types of comments suggest a high level of thought and knowledge is being brought to the intervention.

School B displayed a similar experience with the video tape intervention. One comment made during the first implementation of this intervention stated as a positive remark was "good sound", and "kept tempo". While these comments show initial understanding of what to look and listen for in a recording, they lack some introspection. These comments can be compared to some of School B's comments following the final

implementation of this intervention. One student said, "good transition into the Latin groove, while another one said we need to "play under the soloists at all times". These comments showed a working understanding of musical transitions and a greater attention to detail than some of the earlier comments. While School B showed some improvement in comments, there were also many papers that still showed one or two word answers even during the last intervention. The answers still made sense, like "good tempo", or "needs work at 35", but they still lacked depth. This could possibly be because the students would rather be playing their instruments than writing during jazz band. Even though some of the comments were not all that revealing, the teacher/researcher noted a definite difference in performance levels after the students watched themselves on tape.

One of the best aspects of this intervention is that the students got to see and hear themselves from a different perspective. The sound that an individual hears from his spot in the section is far different than what is actually heard by the audience. After hearing what their performance "really" sounded like, the students often noticed sections that could be changed for the better. The tape does not lie, and when the students saw the tape, it made them more aware of how they were performing.

At the end of the four song cycle, the teacher/researchers presented the students with the same attitude and aptitude tests (Appendices D, E, and F) that were given at the beginning of the study.

These are the results of the musical attitude survey. Compiled below in Tables 3 & 4 are four representative questions that were used in Chapter two of this study. The first number shown in each column is the pre-test data, with the numbers following the slash being the post test data.

Table3. Musical Attitude Representative Questions Displayed with Separate Scores for Band and Chorus. Pre and Post Test

	Strongly Disagree	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
1. I practice my music every day.	Band - 1/3 Chorus - 0/0	Band - 12/10 Chorus - 11/11	Band - 7/4 Chorus - 10/9	Band - 1/4 Chorus - 1/2
2. I like to perform easy music in band/chorus.	Band - 3/4 Chorus - 1/2	Band - 13/6 Chorus - 7/5	Band - 3/8 Chorus - 12/13	Band - 2/3 Chorus -2/2
3. Right now I am performing to my fullest	Band - 0/1 Chorus - 0/0	Band - 4/6 Chorus - 2/5	Band - 12/11 Chorus - 14/16	Band - 5/3 Chorus - 6/1
4. If none of my friends was in band/chorus, I would still be in band/chorus.	Band - 1/0 Chorus - 0/0	Band - 0/2 Chorus - 0/2	Band - 7/7 Chorus - 12/10	Band - 13/12 Chorus - 10/10

Note. Band students = 21 Choral students = 22

Table 4 indicates the total number of students in band and chorus combined who strongly disagreed, disagreed, agreed and strongly agreed with the representative questions from the attitude survey. Once again, the first number in each column represents pre-test data, and the number after the backslash represents the post test data.

Table 4. Musical Attitude Representative Questions with Combined Band/Chorus Scores.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I practice my music every day.	1/3	23/21	17/13	2/6
2. I like to perform easy music in band/chorus.	4/6	20/11	15/21	4/5
3. Right now I am performing to my fullest	0/1	6/11	26/27	11/4
4. If none of my friends were in band/chorus, I would still be in band/chorus.	1/0	0/4	19/17	23/22

Note. Total number of band and chorus students = 43

In analyzing these two tables, one of the key questions to look at is question number three. As can be seen, the number of students who disagreed or strongly disagreed that they are performing up to their fullest potential has doubled from 6 to 12. As can be recalled from Chapter 2, the teacher/researchers were concerned that the students seemed to feel they were performing at a high level even though their aptitude tests did not back up that claim. This data here suggests that the students might be becoming more aware of their actual abilities and discerning about their performance levels. Even the students who agreed that they were performing to their fullest potential were not as emphatic as in the pre test survey. The number of students who strongly

agreed with this statement dropped from 11 to 4 in the post survey data. This could show that in reviewing their performances on tape and hearing professional versions of their songs has changed the students' perceptions of what their fullest potential really was.

The musical performance tests were much easier to evaluate. Figure 3 shows the compiled average test scores, pre and post, from the two sites.

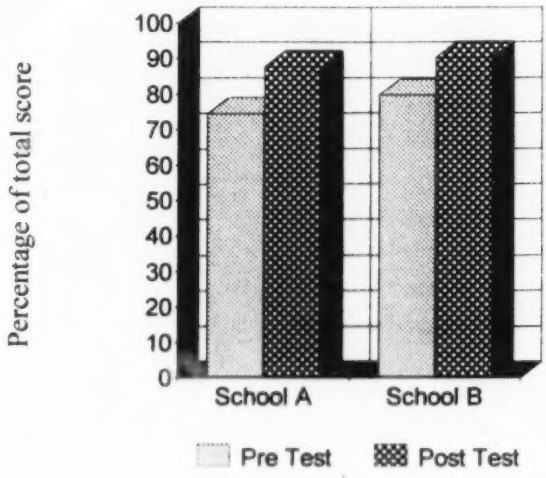

Figure 3. Musical performance pre and post average test scores

Both sites showed improvement in their scores in the post test. School A averaged 74.5% on the pre-test, and a 87.7% average on their post-test. School A also increased their scores, with a 79.6% average on the pre-test, and a 90.2% average on the post-test. This data suggests that the students have increased their musical performance levels, which was one of the main objectives of the study. Another interesting point about this data is that while the performance scores went up, the students' perceptions about their playing skills became more discerning as shown in Table 4. While it is not possible to surmise that the interventions were the sole cause of this jump in aptitude, they were a main focus of instruction during this time period, which would suggest that they were

effective. Another possibility for the jump in performance scores could just be the fact that the students had more experience at the end of the research period than at the beginning. In the case of School B, the students had never played jazz music before the start of this study. Once again though, a main focus of the instruction during this time was the intervention strategies, which might suggest that these strategies would be good for use at the beginning levels of teaching new musical styles.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the presentation and analysis of the data on fostering student motivation to achieve higher levels of musicianship, the students showed a marked improvement in their performance levels. The interventions used in this study seemed to be useful teaching techniques for these subjects. Both performance groups improved in their performance levels, and both teacher/researchers noted how their groups this year seemed to be getting along with each other better than perhaps some groups have in years past. The teacher/researchers observed what seemed to be closer friendships in the organizations than in years past. In the past, at School B where the jazz band members come from 5 different schools, the majority of friendships were from students at the same school. This year, there appeared to be better friendships developed among sections rather than schools. This could be an unexpected result from the sectional interventions. The unity of these groups is very strong in relation to groups past.

While the interventions were very useful, there are a few things that might be done to improve the use of these interventions in the future. For the professional recordings, it was helpful for the groups to not only hear professional versions of the songs they were performing, but also if it is possible to find a decent recording of the actual arrangement that they are playing. Sometimes if the professional arrangement was very different from the students' version, it was hard for them to relate, but any listening activities that are used with performance groups can only help them.

The student led sectionals seemed to be very productive according to the data. For the purpose of this study, the teacher/researchers only had their students working on the selected songs in the cycle. In the future, the teacher/researchers will find time for sectional work on all of the songs in the repertoire. One of the problems of the sectionals is finding the time for them. At School B, the jazz band only met once a week. Spending a 1/2 hour of this time in sectionals helped on that particular song, but it seemed as if they had not gotten as many songs learned as usual by the time in the year the interventions were completed.

The video portion of the intervention worked well as long as good equipment and space was available to do it right. School A had a very good situation for the video set-up, and this ended up being the most useful intervention for the choir students. At School B, the room used for rehearsal was not very conducive to good video reproduction, and the teacher/research felt that a different room and equipment could have greatly enhanced this exercise.

All of these interventions helped to get the students talking with one another about their performances and playing skills. These activities also seemed to help foster personal relationships as well. This interaction not only helped their performing abilities, but also seemed to help their skills in working together toward a common goal. Both teacher/researchers were very pleased with the results from these interventions and will not hesitate to use them in the future.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

CHECKLIST FOR RECORDING INTERVENTION

Dynamics **Intonation**

Rhythm **Tempo**

Interpretive **Non-Musical**

Appendix B

SECTIONAL RUBRIC

SD=Strongly Disagree D=Disagree A=Agree SA=Strongly Agree

The time spent in sectionals was worthwhile.	SD D A SA
We worked well together as a section.	SD D A SA
I was listened to if I had an opinion or problem with the music.	SD D A SA
We accomplished work in sectionals that would be hard to do in a full group rehearsal.	SD D A SA
We should have sectionals more often.	SD D A SA

Appendix C

STUDENT REFLECTION

Please list three positive thoughts about the group performance, three areas in the performance that need work, and one insight on how you can personally improve your performance.

POSITIVE

1.

2.

3.

NEEDS WORK

1.

2.

3.

WHAT CAN I DO?

1.

Appendix D

SURVEY FOR MUSIC PERFORMANCE GROUPS

SD=Strongly Disagree D=Disagree A=Agree SA=Strongly Agree

1. I am in band/chorus because my friends are.	SD	D	A	SA
2. My parents strongly influenced my decision to be in band/chorus.	SD	D	A	SA
3. If none of my friends were in band/chorus, I would still be in band/chorus.	SD	D	A	SA
4. I practice my music every day.	SD	D	A	SA
5. I practice my music at least once a week.	SD	D	A	SA
6. I practice because I want to become a better musician.	SD	D	A	SA
7. I enjoy practicing.	SD	D	A	SA
8. If I practice, I will become a better musician.	SD	D	A	SA
9. Extremely talented individuals do not need to practice.	SD	D	A	SA
10. If I practice, the group will sound better.	SD	D	A	SA
11. No matter how hard I practice, I will never become a great musician.	SD	D	A	SA
12. I like to perform easy music in band/chorus.	SD	D	A	SA
13. I like to perform difficult music in band/chorus	SD	D	A	SA
14. I enjoy solos.	SD	D	A	SA
15. This is really a stupid survey.	SD	D	A	SA
16. If I work hard, I can become a great musician.	SD	D	A	SA
17. I would like to choose the music that we perform	SD	D	A	SA
18. I wish I had more time to practice.	SD	D	A	SA
19. Right now I am performing to my fullest potential.	SD	D	A	SA
20. My talent plays a large role in how well I perform in band/chorus.	SD	D	A	SA

Appendix E

JAZZ BAND AUDITION FORM

Name_____

School_____

Instrument_____

NOTES.....	1	2	3	4	5
RHYTHMS.....	1	2	3	4	5
TONE.....	1	2	3	4	5
TIME.....	1	2	3	4	5
SIGHTREADING.....	1	2	3	4	5

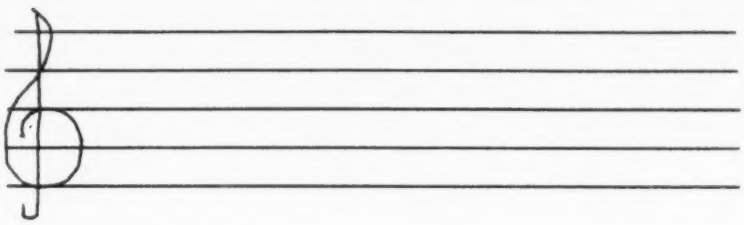
TOTAL_____

Comments:

Appendix F

CHORAL AUDITION SHEET

VOICE RANGE:



INTONATION: 1 2 3 4 5
(cannot match pitch) (matches pitch well)

TONE QUALITY: 1 2 3 4 5
(little breath support) (breath support)

SOLO: YES NO
(has solo quality voice) (not ready for a solo at this time)